



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Partnership Technical Advisory Committee

DATE: November 20, 2006

FR: Therese Knudsen, Planner

W.I.: 1311

RE: Lifeline Transportation Program – Program of Projects

Background

In December 2005, MTC adopted Resolution No. 3726, which establishes guiding principles for the Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP) for a three-year period (FY06 – FY08). The LTP is intended to improve mobility options for low-income residents in the Bay Area by funding transportation projects designed to address their transportation needs. The LTP is being administered at the local (county) level. Funding for the program is comprised of federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funds, and State Transit Assistance (STA) funds, for a regional total of \$18,232,956 for the three years. Estimated funding targets were assigned to each county based on each county's percentage of poverty population relative to the regional total.

In Spring 2006, seven Bay Area counties issued a call for projects for Lifeline funding consideration. (Marin and Sonoma will issue Lifeline calls for projects within a year¹). Projects eligible for funding included those that were consistent with the findings of an MTC-sponsored community-based transportation plan, a countywide regional welfare-to-work plan or another documented assessment of transportation need in a low-income community. Projects were evaluated by a standard set of evaluation criteria as documented in Resolution No. 3726, although each county had the option of adding additional criteria. Counties were encouraged to appoint a local evaluation committee representing a range of stakeholders to score and select projects. Recommended Lifeline projects from each county were due to MTC on July 31, 2006.

Proposed Lifeline Program of Projects

MTC received thirty-six recommended Lifeline projects totaling nearly \$16 million. The projects are a mix of transit and shuttle services, transportation services for children, capital projects, subsidized transit projects and projects that improve access to autos for low-income families.

¹ At the time of the Lifeline Call for Projects, Sonoma County had just recently launched their only community-based transportation plan in Roseland and wanted to wait until the plan was near completion before issuing a funding opportunity. Similarly, Marin County wanted to wait until their Marin City plan was launched and near completion. Solano issued a call for projects, but kept some of their Lifeline allocation in reserve for a second call for projects when the Cordelia and Vallejo community-based transportation plans are near completion.

All projects are recommended for funding except the lowest-ranked project in San Mateo County due to the project's eligibility relative to Lifeline funding sources, as well as issues regarding local funding. In addition, given the programming constraints outlined below, one project in Santa Clara County is being withdrawn.

Programming Constraints

Since receiving the projects, MTC staff has considered preliminary assignment of either CMAQ, JARC or STA funds to each project, based on project eligibility. Most of the projects have been eligible for at least one of the available funding sources. However, one type of project – subsidized or free transit passes – is currently not eligible to receive any of the LTP funding sources. It was initially anticipated that transit pass projects could be eligible to receive either JARC or STA funds. However, since the Spring when the call for projects was released, the Federal Transit Administration has provided additional guidance on the eligibility of JARC funds for transit pass projects, indicating that the direct funding of subsidized transit bus passes would not be an eligible JARC expense. Similarly, upon further review, subsidized transit pass projects are not eligible to receive STA funding. MTC is working with the county Lifeline administrators to swap LTP funds for more flexible local transportation dollars for four of the five affected projects to be able to fund these transit pass programs.

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Starting in FY 2007, projects funded through JARC (as well as the New Freedom and 5310 programs) are subject to a SAFETEA planning requirement. JARC funded projects are to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. MTC has completed a draft low-income component of the plan based on a synthesis of extensive transportation planning focused on low-income populations that MTC has sponsored throughout the region. The projects included in the Lifeline Transportation Program of Projects were derived from these plans and are strategies that have been identified and proposed in these planning efforts to address the transportation needs of low-income populations throughout the region.

Although FTA has not issued a final ruling on preparing the coordinated plan, MTC will review the final ruling when it is issued and amend the region's plan accordingly should it require additional elements not currently included.

Next Steps

The draft Lifeline Program of Projects and recommended funding plan is attached and will be reviewed at your November meeting.